What is claimed is:

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1	1.	A system for	speech uni	t selection	comprising.
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- a large speech database referencing speech waveforms and associated symbolic prosodic features, wherein the speech database is accessed by speech
- 4 waveform designators, at least one designator being associated with a
- sequence of one or more diphones; and
- a speech waveform selector, in communication with the speech database, that selects based, at least in part, on the symbolic prosodic features stored in
- the speech database, waveforms referenced by the speech database.
- 2. A system according to claim 1, wherein the speech waveform selector uses criteria
- 2 that favor approximately equally all waveform candidates having low level prosody
- 3 features within a target range determined as a function of high level linguistic features.
- 1 3. A system for speech unit selection comprising:
- a large speech database referencing speech waveforms;
- a speech waveform selector, in communication with the speech database, that
- 4 selects waveforms referenced by the speech database using criteria that, at
- least in part, favor (i) waveform candidates based directly on high level
- 6 prosody features, and (ii) approximately equally all waveform candidates
- 7 having low level prosody features within a target range determined as a
- 8 function of high level linguistic features.
- 4. A system according to claim 2 or 3, wherein the criteria include a first requirement
- 2 favoring waveform candidates having pitch within a target range determined as a function
- 3 of high level linguistic features.
- 5. A system according to claim 2 or 3, wherein the criteria include a second requirement
- 2 favoring waveform candidates having a duration within a target range determined as a
- 3 function of high level linguistic features.
- 6. A system according to claim 2 or 3, wherein the criteria include a third requirement
- 2 favoring waveform candidates having coarse pitch continuity within a target range
- 3 determined as a function of high-level linguistic features.

7. A system according to claim 2 or 3, wherein the synthesizer operates to select among waveform candidates without recourse to specific target duration values or specific target pitch contour values over time.